

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 05065 01 OF 02 310906Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSM-03 SES-02 SAA-01 ACDA-12
OMB-01 IO-13 /092 W
-----040524 310917Z /12

O P 310831Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9479
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 5065

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE
SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION, AUGUST 31, 1978, 1130 HRS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 5045 (DTG 301444Z AUG 78)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THE SITUATION IN NORTH LEBANON IS STILL
TENSE: SYRIAN TROOPS REMAIN IN THE TOWN OF BSHARRI AND
THE SYRIAN COMMANDER FOR NORTH LEBANON, ALI DIB, REMAINS AT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 05065 01 OF 02 310906Z

POST DESPITE HIS REPORTED DISMISSAL. TWO ISRAELI PLANES BROKE
THE SOUND BARRIER OVER BEIRUT ON AUGUST 30 AMID WHAT THE
BEIRUT PRESS CALLED ISRAELI "WARNINGS". THE SITUATION IN THE
CAPITAL IS RELATIVELY CALM. A LEBANESE MAGAZINE SAID THAT
SUDAN WOULD PULL ITS CONTINGENT OUT OF THE ARAB
DETERRENT FORCE. MICHEL AL KHOURY WAS APPOINTED
GOVERNOR OF THE CENTRAL BANK. PRESIDENT SARKIS WILL GO

TO THE VATICAN FOR THE ENTHRONEMENT OF POPE JOHN PAUL I.
END SUMMARY.

2. NORTH LEBANON.

A. THE SITUATION IN NORTH LEBANON REMAINS TENSE.
ALTHOUGH SYRIAN TROOPS HAVE WITHDRAWN FROM THE TOWN OF
CEDARS, THEY REMAIN IN BSHARRI AND ALONG THE CEDARS ROAD
BETWEEN BSHARRI AND DAYR AL AHMAR. TWO MORE BODIES OF
PEOPLE KILLED BY THE SYRIAN TROOPS WERE FOUND IN THE
AREA, ACCORDING TO PRESS AND OTHER SOURCES. (SIX PEOPLE
FROM BSHARRI WERE FOUND DEAD IN THE CEDARS ON AUGUST 28.)

B. THE SYRIAN COMMANDER IN LEBANON, ALI ASLAN, ON
AUGUST 29 ORDERED THE DISMISSAL OF THE SYRIAN COMMANDER
FOR NORTH LEBANON, ALI DIB, AS A RESULT OF MISCONDUCT OF
SYRIAN TROOPS IN THE CEDARS REGION, ACCORDING TO PRESS AND
OTHER SOURCES. DIB, HOWEVER, STILL REMAINS IN HIS POST,
ACCORDING TO VARIOUS SOURCES. (DIB REPORTS DIRECTLY TO RIFAT
AL ASSAD, THE BROTHER OF SYRIAN PRESIDENT HAFIZ AL ASSAD,
AND MAY BE ABLE TO IGNORE ASLAN'S ORDER.)

C. MEANWHILE, THE LEADERS OF BSHARRI ON AUGUST 30
FORMED A "SEVEN-MAN DEFENSE COMMITTEE" AND DEMANDED
THE IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF THE SYRIAN FORCES FROM THE
TOWN.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 05065 01 OF 02 310906Z

D. PRESIDENT SARKIS, AS USUAL, HAS MADE NO PUBLIC
STATEMENT. HE WAS QUOTED IN MOST BEIRUT NEWSPAPERS,
HOWEVER, AS TELLING THE WEEKLY CABINET MEETING ON
AUGUST 30 THAT "A CAREFUL INVESTIGATION WAS NECESSARY
TO BRING MATTERS UNDER CONTROL AND THAT THE ADF COMMAND
HAS ORDERED THE ACTIVATION OF THE SPECIAL INQUIRY
COMMISSION." (THIS COMMISSION IS A LEBANESE-SYRIAN
TRIBUNAL ESTABLISHED LAST FEBRUARY TO LOOK INTO CRIMES
COMMITTED BY OR AGAINST THE ADF IN LEBANON.)

3. ISRAELI OVERFLIGHTS.

AT 1700 HOURS ON AUGUST 30 TWO ISRAELI PLANES FLYING
AT HIGH ALTITUDE BROKE THE SOUND BARRIER OVER THE CAPITAL.
THE BEIRUT PRESS SAID THAT THE OVERFLIGHTS CAME AMID CON-
TINUING ISRAELI WARNINGS TO SYRIA TO STOP ITS CAMPAIGN
AGAINST THE LEBANESE FRONT MILITIAS.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 05065 02 OF 02 310913Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03

PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSM-03 SES-02 SAA-01 ACDA-12

OMB-01 IO-13 /092 W

-----040635 310917Z /12

O P 310831Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9480

INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON ENG

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER

COMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

DIA WASHDC

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 5065

4. SITUATION IN BEIRUT.

A. THE SITUATION IN BEIRUT AREA HAS BEEN RELATIVELY CALM AND THERE HAS BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT FIGHTING SINCE THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF AUGUST 30 (SEE AUGUST 30 SITREP).

B. THERE WERE BRIEF GUNBATTLES, HOWEVER, THE EVENING OF AUGUST 30 BETWEEN TWO CHRISTIAN GROUPS--THE NLP AND TANZIM--IN THE BEIRUT SUBURB OF ANTILYAS, AND BETWEEN TWO
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 05065 02 OF 02 310913Z

LEFTIST GROUPS--THE PSP AND MURABITUN--IN WEST BEIRUT. WE ASSUME BOTH FIGHTS WERE OVER LOCAL PROTECTION RACKETS.

5. SUDAN TO PULL OUT OF ADF.

A. THE LEBANESE WEEKLY MAJAZINE AS SAYAD ON AUGUST 30 QUOTED SUDANESE PRESIDENT NUMAYRI AS SAYING THAT HE WOULD WITHDRAW HIS TROOPS FROM THE ARAB DEFENSE FORCE (ADF) WHEN THE ADF'S MANDATE EXPIRED ON OCTOBER 27. "WE ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE ACTION OF THE ARAB PEACE FORCE IN LEBANON AND WILL NOT, THEREFORE, RENEW THE TERM OF OUR TROOPS," THE MAGAZINE QUOTED HIM AS SAYING.

B. COMMENT: SYRIA PROVIDES MOST OF THE TROOPS FOR THE ADF, BUT SUDAN AND SAUDI ARABIA NOW FURNISH TOKEN FORCES. THE WITHDRAWAL OF SUDAN FROM THE ADF WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE AND SERVE TO INCREASE CHRISTIAN FEARS THAT THE ADF IS NOTHING BUT A SYRIAN OCCUPATION FORCE. END COMMENT.

6. NEW CENTRAL BANK GOVERNOR.

THE CABINET ON AUGUST 30 NAMED MICHEL AL KHOURY AS GOVERNOR OF THE CENTRAL BANK OF LEBANON, A POST WHICH HAS IN EFFECT BEEN VACANT SINCE 1976 WHEN ELIAS SARKIS, THE PREVIOUS GOVERNOR, WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT. KHOURY WILL REPLACE THE ACTING GOVERNOR FARID SOLH. KHOURY, WHO IS 52 YEARS OLD, IS THE SON OF THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF LEBANON, BISHARA AL KHOURY.

7. SARKIS TO THE VATICAN.

PRESIDENT SARKIS WILL HEAD LEBANESE DELEGATION TO THE ENTHRONEMENT OF POPE JOHN PAUL I AT THE VATICAN ON
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 05065 02 OF 02 310913Z

SEPTEMBER 3, ACCORDING TO AN OFFICIAL GOL ANNOUNCEMENT. THE MEMBERS AND DELEGATION WILL ALSO INCLUDE FOREIGN MINISTER FUAD BOUTROS, MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AMIN BIZRI, MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH IBRAHIM CHEAITO, AND MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE MICHEL DOUMIT.
KINSOLVING

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, POLITICAL SITUATION, COMBAT OPERATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT05065
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780355-1012
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978081/aaaaaanc.tel
Line Count: 212
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 72ad8457-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BEIRUT 5045
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1536467
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANESE SITUATION, AUGUST 31, 1978, 1130 HRS LOCAL
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/72ad8457-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014